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NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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Rail Division Deputy Director Allan Paul Retires After 44 Years of Working on the Railroad

After 44 years of working on the railroad, Deputy Rail Division Director Allan Paul has decided to “Pull the Pin” and retire on Feb. 1, 2020. Allan is a proud 1975 graduate of Wake Forest University and adheres to the school’s “Pro Humanitate” motto, which is understood to mean that we do what we do for the sake of humanity, for the people of the world. It is a very specific call to community service.

He joined the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources in September 1975 and served five years with that agency. His most notable achievement during his tenure at Cultural Resources was the preservation and restoration of the Historic Spencer Shops which is now the North Carolina Transportation Museum. From 1980–1992, Allan was self-employed and performed contract work with Class One, Regional and Tourist railroads throughout North America.



Allan Paul (left) and Craig Newton inspect Greensboro Station track and platform work, 2005 (Photo by Ken Taylor)

In 1988 Governor Jim Martin appointed Allan to the “Governor’s Task Force on Passenger Rail Service.” Four years later the governor and then NCDOT Secretary Tommy Harrelson asked Allan to develop and implement NCDOT’s state passenger rail program. Starting as a Transportation Planner, Allan rose through various positions to become Deputy Director of the Rail Division.

Thanks to his vision, guidance and leadership, North Carolina’s passenger rail program now offers three daily round trips between Charlotte and Raleigh on North Carolina’s *Piedmont* service, in addition to Amtrak’s *Carolinian* (Trains 79 and 80) Charlotte-Raleigh-New York service which began in 1990. Under Allan’s leadership, North Carolina’s passenger program has become a national leader in customer satisfaction and cost-effective operations.

To expand service beyond the once daily *Carolinian* round trip, locomotives and coaches were needed. At the time new equipment was in short supply and cost prohibitive. To get *Piedmont* service up and running in a timely manner and within budget, Allan developed a program where used equipment was purchased and refurbished. In 1995, *Piedmont* (Trains 73 and 74) service began with two state-owned GP 40 locomotives and five passenger cars, adding a second Raleigh to Charlotte round trip to North Carolina intercity train service.

As Allan worked to expand passenger options and add more equipment to the state’s *Piedmont* fleet, work was underway to improve safety and capacity on the busy North Carolina Railroad mainline between Raleigh and Charlotte. Equipment refurbishments and railroad improvements enabled the addition of a third round trip in 2010 and a fourth in 2018.



Allan reviewing Piedmont Improvement Program projects, 2017 Inspection Train



Allan at opening of Raleigh Union Station, 2018

During this time of passenger service expansion, Allan and his team also preserved, restored and/or built 25 train stations throughout North Carolina. The Station Improvement Program has greatly impacted the growth of passenger service and on economic development in the state. All stations that serve intercity passenger trains have been enhanced, making

each station unique. The Rail Division made the best use of existing stations and adaptively reused buildings that were not former stations, as in the case of the Durham Station and the recently completed Raleigh Union Station.

Work is now underway to develop Gateway Station on property in Uptown Charlotte that was advanced under Allan's guidance as the best location for a multimodal and multiuse station.

He has served on numerous state and national passenger rail committees, and is an original member of the national "Next Generation Equipment Committee." Over the last ten years, they developed designs and specifications for new passenger locomotives and railcars now being manufactured in the United States. Allan also served as the lead Rail Division representative on the "State Emergency Response Team" since 1996.

His proudest accomplishment, however, has been the many friendships, past and present, he has been privileged to gain at NCDOT and throughout the railroad industry.



Allan at the controls during a locomotive demonstration



Allan (right) at NC Volunteer Train Host training session

Under Allan's lead, the Rail Division's corridor program has also become a national model for preserving and returning to service under-utilized rail corridors. He guided and grew the North Carolina Volunteer Train Host Program to become the longest running and most successful volunteer host program in the United States. Throughout his years of service with the Rail Division, he nurtured many productive partnerships with local, county, state and federal agencies, as well as Amtrak and North Carolina's Class One and short line railroads.



Allan Paul (left), former Rail Director Paul Worley and former Rail Planning Manager Mark Sullivan at Amtrak's X-2000 equipment demonstration in 1993



Allan inspects the Piedmont Corridor

The Rail Division congratulates Allan on his many years of exemplary service to our state and thanks him for his tremendous contributions to the success of North Carolina's passenger rail services.

Deal Advances on Southeast Rail Corridor

North Carolina has received good transportation news as an important agreement reached on Dec. 19 will advance plans to improve the Southeast's freight and passenger rail network.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation recently announced a major deal with CSX. Part of the deal will enable the N.C. Department of Transportation to acquire a 10-mile portion of an inactive freight line in North Carolina so it can be converted for use on the Southeast Rail Corridor.

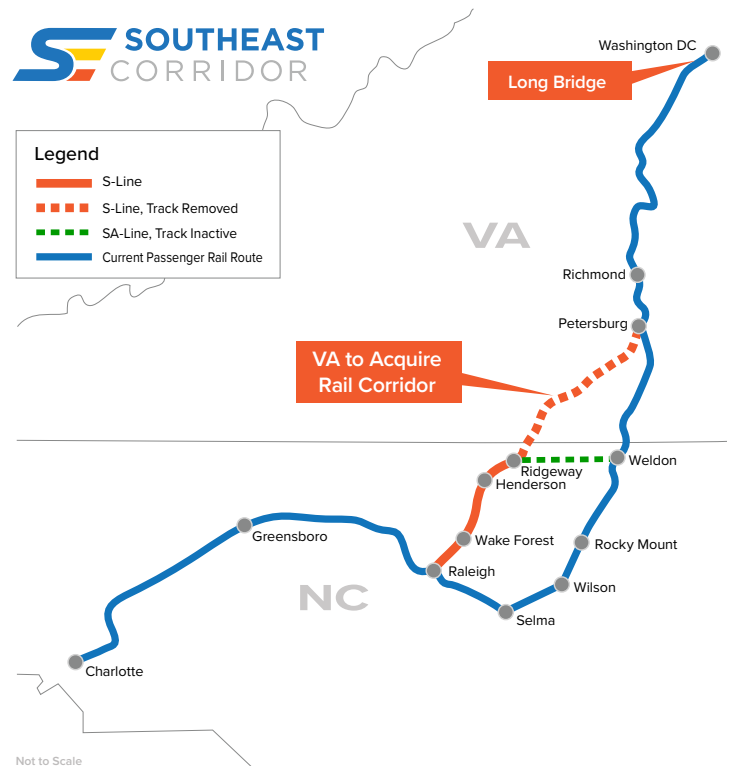
The Southeast Rail Corridor is a network of passenger and freight rail from Washington D.C. to Jacksonville, Fla. The rail runs roughly parallel to Interstate 85 and U.S. 1 through North Carolina. The 10-mile section to be acquired runs from Ridgeway in Warren County to the North Carolina-Virginia border.

"This is a key step as we work to improve our rail system to move people and goods more efficiently between North Carolina and communities along the East Coast," said Jason Orthner, director of the NCDOT's Rail Division.

This deal will also enable the construction of a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River, and acquisition of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way.

This deal comes as officials with North Carolina and Virginia are strategizing about how to acquire both in-service and out-of-service rail lines for enhanced freight and passenger services. North Carolina Sen. Tom McInnis is chairman of the North Carolina delegation of the VA-NC Interstate High Speed Rail Compact and a chairman of state legislative transportation committees.

"This agreement takes us a big step forward in our efforts to better connect North Carolina communities," McInnis said. "And it will offer new connections between our state and our neighbors, providing lasting economic development opportunities."

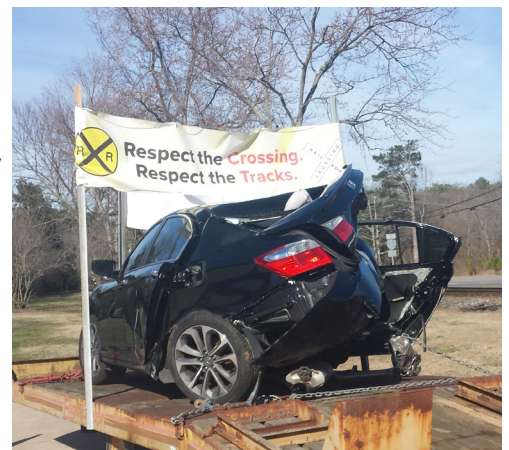


Morrisville Police, NCDOT Stage Crashed Car to Promote Rail Safety

Throughout January, a crashed vehicle was on display near the railroad crossing at Morrisville-Carpenter Road and Chapel Hill Road in Wake County as part of the "Operation Respect the Tracks" campaign sponsored by the Morrisville Police Department and the NCDOT Rail Division. The crashed car, which stemmed from an incident at the location on Nov. 30, 2019 was accompanied by a banner and rail safety messaging.

Drivers need to remember the following rail safety tips:

- Always expect a train at every highway-rail intersection;
- It takes a train traveling at 55 miles per hour more than a mile to stop;
- Trains always have the right-of-way, even when emergency and law enforcement vehicles are involved;
- Always stop your vehicle when crossing gates are down or lights are flashing. Never try to drive around the gate;
- Never stop your car on railroad tracks. When approaching an intersection at railroad tracks, keep your car safely behind the white lines; and
- Never race a train to a crossing.



NC By Train Experiences Record-Setting Thanksgiving Holiday

Sunday, Dec. 1 was a record-setting day on the *Piedmonts* with 2,244 total passengers handled on all six of the *Piedmont* trains. Train 76 had the highest on board count at 486.

The *Carolínians* also had very good ridership that day. Train 79 had 864 passengers and train 80 had 870 for a total of 1,734.

The combined ridership on the *Piedmont* and *Carolinian* trains for Dec. 1 was 3,958. This Sunday was part of the Thanksgiving holiday ridership period which covers the Wednesday before Thanksgiving through the following Sunday.



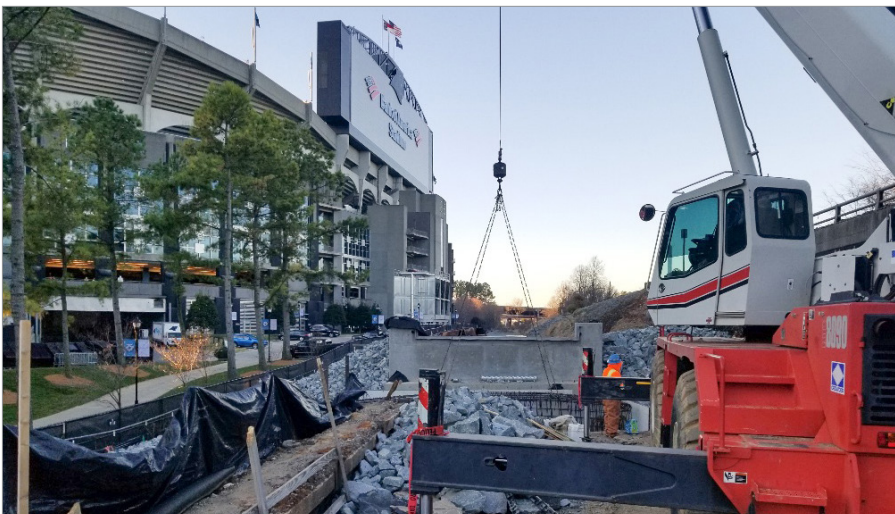
Passengers Traveling for Thanksgiving Enjoy New Benches at Cary Station

Ridership at Cary soared after the station was expanded, from 40,000 per year in 2011, to more than 80,000 per year currently. As a result, many passengers had to sit on the floor or stand, so two new waiting room benches were custom made to match the existing benches and delivered in November. Cary Depot consistently ranks number one nationally in Amtrak's quarterly passenger surveys of overall station experience.

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



Greyhound station moved



P&N bridge work by the Bank of America Stadium



Pouring 4th Street bridge cap



Retaining wall work by Bank of America Stadium

CCX Construction Update

The Rocky Mount CCX Intermodal Terminal Site preparation and surveying is ongoing. Significant grading operations are underway for the wheeled parking area, transfer staging area and the south lead tracks.



Aerial view of terminal site looking west



Aerial view of terminal site looking north



Aerial view of south lead tracks roadbed grading

NCDOT and the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad Improve Crossings

Our featured crossings this month are both on the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad. NCDOT Division 14 and Henderson County Maintenance assisted the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad and the Rail Division with improving the Cane Creek Road crossing near Fletcher. The surface of this crossing consisted of timber and asphalt inside the gauge of the track, and asphalt only outside. The timbers were deteriorating and in need of replacement. The new surface is asphalt and rubber rail seal providing a better crossing surface for drivers.

NCDOT Division 13 and Buncombe County Maintenance assisted the railroad and the Rail Division with improving the Hominy Baptist Church Road near Candler. This crossing

was asphalt and rubber rail seal, plus the asphalt was failing, creating potholes and uneven asphalt inside the gauge of the track. This was replaced with new rail seal and asphalt, giving drivers a much improved crossing surface.



Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – October 2019 vs. 2018						
	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2019	2018	% +/-	2019	2018	% +/-
Piedmont	22,238	20,480	9%	\$539,500	\$498,751	8%
Carolinian	22,027	22,735	-3%	\$1,397,806	\$1,426,083	-2%

1,225

Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in October supporting NC By Train onboard and at events

October 2019 – Service modifications affected four *Piedmont* trains and one *Carolinian* train.

2019 Santa Train on the *Piedmont*

Three hundred kids of all ages enjoyed this year's Raleigh Santa Train. On the round trip between Raleigh and Greensboro, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited each child and their families. A special thanks to the NC Train Host Association volunteers and Rail Plan for helping the Rail Division and Amtrak make this day a success.

